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SIPDIS

AIDAC
SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR AF/SPG, PRM, AND ALSO PASS USAID/W
USAID FOR DCHA SUDAN TEAM, AFR/SP
NAIROBI FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA, USAID/REDSO, AND FAS
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH
NAIROBI FOR SFO
NSC FOR PMARCHAM, MMAGAN, AND TSHORTLEY
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
USUN FOR TMALY
BRUSSELS FOR PLERNER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [SU](#) [KHDP](#)
SUBJECT: DARFUR - NGO OUTLOOK BLEAK IN MEETING WITH SE
NATSIOS

KHARTOUM 00002869 001.2 OF 002

SUMMARY AND COMMENT

1. (SBU) On December 12, Special Envoy Natsios met with 11 members of the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) NGO Forum Steering Committee in Khartoum to solicit their perspectives on the humanitarian situation in Darfur. Oxfam, Help Age, Tearfund, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), GOAL, CARE International, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Action Contre la Faim (ACF) represented the council at the meeting. Discussions focused on the deteriorating security environment and the varying situations in the three Darfur states. NGOs have developed, and in many cases are implementing, contingency plans. If the trend in violence continues, it will be very difficult for aid organizations to continue operating at the current level, limiting assistance to affected populations. End summary and comment.

HARASSMENT, IMPEDIMENTS - ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

2. (SBU) Humanitarian agencies voiced their concerns about increased intimidation from a number of parties. Although the motives for the December 7 shooting at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) house in Kutum, North Darfur, remain speculative, the fact that such an act occurred was "a bad sign." (Comment. In West Darfur, both NGOs and the UN believe that humanitarian agencies are being directly targeted. End comment.)

3. (SBU) Government of National Unity (GNU) sensitivity has resulted in a reduction in protection-related programming. One NGO representative stated that the humanitarian community has gone head-to-head with the GNU, particularly since IRC issued a press release about sexual assaults in Kalma camp in August. The GNU accuses NGOs of collecting and providing intelligence to foreign governments, as well as providing opposition groups with logistical support, such as vehicles

and radios. SE Natsios stated that he rebuffed these accusations, telling the GNU directly that NGOs were not the source of USG information on the situation in Darfur and that the USG has other sources for such information.

¶4. (SBU) The NRC representative indicated that its expulsion from South Darfur has had a chilling effect on both the scope of protection reporting as well as organizations' willingness to engage in protection issues. (Note: The spate of recent evacuations from El Fasher, Kutum, Kulbus, Silea, Sirba, Sanidadi, and Ed Daein reduced humanitarian access to vulnerable populations. The withdrawal has hamstrung protection reporting in all evacuated areas until humanitarians can return. End note.) One representative stressed that NGOs do not simply distribute items, but provide a full package of services to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and that the GNU should accept this. NGOs expressed concern that NRC's expulsion could become a precedent.

¶5. (SBU) NGO representatives requested the expansion of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Darfur, stating that OCHA played an important role as a buffer between the GNU and NGOs, and that OCHA presence was needed outside of the major towns. SE Natsios requested a list of the locations where NGOs thought an OCHA presence would be beneficial.

¶6. (SBU) SE Natsios also told participants that GNU Minister of Humanitarian Affairs Kostis Manibe had informed the U.S. delegation that the GNU had extended the Moratorium on Restrictions until January 31, 2008. The NGOs asked SE Natsios to request a formal GNU written statement to that effect. Humanitarian representatives insisted that the GNU issue the statement before the end of the week, in order to provide sufficient time for the GNU Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) to be informed of the extension.

KHARTOUM 00002869 002.2 OF 002

AMIS

¶7. (SBU) NGOs indicated a severe need for African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) patrols to provide protection around camps and conflict-affected areas. Firewood patrols are sporadic, and in critical areas, AMIS no longer conducts them. When OCHA requested that AMIS resume firewood patrols in Kalma camp near Nyala, the AMIS representative responded, "Only if we feel safe." SE Natsios and CDA Hume responded that AMIS has a siege mentality, and that only a change at the highest levels of the military leadership would foment a more robust approach.

¶8. (SBU) NGO representatives reported that AMIS has begun implementing quick-impact projects (QIPs) in Darfur in an effort to win hearts and minds. Those present felt quite strongly that this was an encroachment on humanitarian space and dangerous for NGOs, because such actions suggest that AMIS and NGOs serve the same function or may be collaborating. Those present agreed that AMIS should focus on peacekeeping and protection.

DARFUR SECURITY SITUATION WORSENING

¶9. (SBU) The GNU continues to implement a policy of divide and conquer, an approach that seems to have "atomized" Darfur and created numerous additional independent armed actors with no hierarchy. One NGO stated that some people in the IDP camps were "carrying so many weapons that they couldn't move." Targeting of civilians has increased, particularly in West Darfur.

¶10. (SBU) Responding to a question from SE Natsios, the NGO representatives said they had not heard of any atrocities carried out by the National Redemption Front, G19, or other armed groups. SE Natsios said that the opposition intelligence network was very good and that people are pre-evacuated before an attack. He said that this explained the limited number of new displacements in North Darfur. One NGO mentioned that in North Darfur, villagers and others in opposition-held areas have radios that can intercept Antonov communications. When Antonov target locations are identified, villagers evacuate before the attack begins, and return once the bombers have departed.

¶11. (SBU) SE Natsios requested that the agencies provide him with key information following attacks, such as what tribes have been attacked and displaced; whether any atrocities have been committed; and whether organizations see build-ups of arms in IDP camps. SE Natsios indicated he would also appreciate knowledge of increased Janjaweed presence. The participants indicated a willingness to provide that information, but not directly from Sudan.

PLAN B ANXIETY

¶12. (SBU) When asked about "Plan B," SE Natsios responded that while he would not discuss the details, the implications of "Plan B" would be severe and that several governments in addition to the USG would be behind it. Should "Plan B" be implemented, it would not be a gradual ramping-up of pressure, and NGOs should be making contingency plans now. SE Natsios stated that the GNU uses NGOs and IDPs to blackmail the international community into inaction, and that such manipulation would not be allowed to continue. He indicated that NGOs and the international community would be informed in advance of activating a "Plan B" that would impact humanitarian programs. He indicated that the USG would change policy in January if there was no significant improvement on the ground in Sudan.
HUME